THE NATURE and NECESSITY OF THE NEW CREATURE IN CHRIST, STATED and DESCRIBED ACCORDING TO HEART'S EXPERIENCE and TRUE PRACTICE.

BY

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TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN
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By it SHE being dead, yet speaketh. Heb. xi. 4.

——Not that I incline
To pin my Faith on any one Divine;
But Man, or Woman, whoso'er it be,
That speaks true Doctrine, is a Pope to me.
Where Truth alone is Interest and Aim,
Who would regard a Person or a Name?
Or in the Search of it impartial, scoff,
Or scorn the meanest Instrument thereof?
Dr. Byrom's Epistle to a Gentleman of the Temple.

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THE TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

IMmenſely numerous are the religious publications of the preſent day; which are made for various ends, and drawn up in a ſtudied and artificial manner, more according to the ſyſtem each other happens to have been educated in, or may otherwiſe have imbibed and dopted, than real heart's knowledge. It would be eaſy to ſuppoſe, what experience atteſts, that the approving Reader's taſte will correſpond to that of the Writer; and of conſequence, that very few books of this ſort will be rightly reliſhed, but by the party, whoſe Shibboleth they ſpeak, and tend to magnify and ſupport.

The preſent piece will be deſtitute of this recommendation. It is of no party, as ſuch, and yet of every party. God grant it may rather be accepted than rejected by them all. If a beautiful ſimplicity, pure zeal for genuine chriſtianity, ſound truth in the inward parts, and heart's experience, according to the word of God, can overbalance

merely human conſiderations, and be any motive to ſuch as are ſincerely concerned to become the true followers of a crucified Jeſus; I dare venture to preſage a favourable reception amongſt ſuch; and to promiſe them, that the following pages will afford a bleſſed opportunity of "examining themſelves, whether they be in the faith; of "proving their ownſelves, and knowing, whether Jeſus "Chriſt be really in them; or, whether they are as yet "reprobates;" or, in other words, counterfeit chriſtians, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. *Jer.* vi. 30. "*If our heart,*" *in this light,* "*condemn us not, then have we confidence towards* "*God: but if our heart condemn us, God is greater* "*than our heart, and knoweth all things.*" 1 John iii. 20, 21. *In this latter alarming yet ſalutary ſtate, what ſhall we do? Shall we change one form of deluſion for another, and continue to hide ourſelves from ourſelves amidſt that almoſt infinite variety, which, it is to be feared, ſatan, as an angel of light, has in theſe laſt days of liberty furniſhed the world with; and all tending to perſuade men, that,* "*they may be Chriſt's without* "*having his Spirit?*" *Rom.* viii. 9. *(I mean in fact, for in explicit notion who dare aſſert this?) Shall we turn over the elaborate books, or aſk counſel of the reputedly pious and learned, but really unexperienced doctors and teachers, whom our bleſſed Lord calls,* "*Blind leaders of* "*the blind?*" *Matt.* xv. 14. "*who ſhut up the king-*"*dom of heaven againſt men, neither going in themſelves,* "*nor ſuffering them that are entering to go in?*" *chap.* xxiii. 13. *By no means; unleſs we chuſe* "*to fall* "*with them into the ditch; and with them to be caſt* "*into outer darkneſs, where there is weeping and* "*gnaſhing of teeth.*" *Matt.* viii. 11, 12. *What ſhall we then do, under a ſuſpenſe, and at a criſis ſo painful and important? Do, as St. Paul did,* "*Confer not with* "*fleſh and blood; but be obedient to the heavenly viſi-*

"*tation.*"

"tation." *Gal.* i. 16. *Acts* xxvi. 19. *Believe the faithful and infallible inward Teacher in your own hearts. John* xvi. 8. vi. 45. 1 *John* ii. 27. *and in heart's humble ſubmiſſion to the divine gracious reproof and conviction, take the Publican's words into your mouth, in truth and righteouſneſs,* "God be merciful to "me, a ſinner!" *Luke* xviii. 13. *If your Saviour is not glad* "to juſtify, *and to ſave every loſt ſinner. chap.* xix. 10. *if he* "doth not love mercy, *rather than ſa-* "crifice." *Matt.* ix. 13. *if there be no victory through the blood of the Lamb. Rev.* xii. 11. *thy caſe is irremediable. But if it* "be a true ſaying, *and worthy of* "all acceptation, *that Jeſus Chriſt came into the world* "to ſave ſinners; *yea, the chief of ſinners,*" 1 *Tim.* i. 15. *thy caſe is not only not deſperate, but highly hopeful; and ſuch ſcripture-declarations, often talked, and perhaps preached on, but never truly felt and underſtood before, will give thee, by really believing them, a foundation and conſolation the ſtranger intermeddleth not with.*

Should then this little piece, in concurrence with the Spirit of truth from Jeſus, prove the means of inducing any one irreligious profligate to become truly ſerious and religious; of diſabuſing and convincing any amongſt the now ſo numerous falſe chriſtians; and of bringing both, as living branches into Chriſt the true vine: Should any real member of his myſtical body be hereby in any degree edified and confirmed; ſhould one or all theſe bleſſed effects be obtained, I ſhall think myſelf amply rewarded for the ſmall pains I have been at in its tranſlation and publication.

Let me juſt obſerve, that I know no more of the author, than that ſhe appears to have been a lady of ſome rank in life; and that ſhe lived near a century ſince at Francfort on the Mayne: That a copy of this letter,

tranſcribed by one J. Philip Dorre in 1741, *came as a ſoiled manuſcript into my hands, and in a way, I might think providential: That it has lain by me unnoticed for many years; but lately finding a deſire to read, I was ſtrongly inclined to tranſlate and publiſh it.*

Should the reader be, on any account whatſoever, diſpoſed to ſlight what is here with a ſincere intention offered for his ſoul's benefit; I have not the leaſt right to complain. Every man has his taſte, and I have mine. I profeſs myſelf only a learner in the ſchool of God, and am deſirous of aſſiſting, and being aſſiſted by my fellow chriſtians. And in regard to this, I am truly content to await the deciſion of the day, "*which will try all things, and* "*manifeſt the counſels of all hearts.*" 1 *Cor.* iii. 13. iv. 5. *In the mean time, with reference to my Author, I only beg leave to ſuggeſt and leave the words of Jeremiah on my reader's mind and conſcienc:*

"*The prophet, that hath a dream, let him tell a* "*dream; and he that hath my word, let him ſpeak my* "*word faithfully: What is the chaff to the wheat, ſaith* "*the Lord?*" *Jer.* xxiii. 28.

THE
NATURE and NECESSITY
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STATED and DESCRIBED.

To my two dear and worthy Sisters, Christina Sibylla Maria Philippina, and Carolina Augustina Philippina, the grace of God, which is in Christ Jesus, and the power of his death and of his resurrection for the production of a New Creature; together with all the unsearchable riches, lying hid in him for time and eternity; are, with this letter, wished, by

Their faithful Sister,

Joanna Eleonora de Merlau.

I AM not unapprized, that you both heartily desire to be real partakers of your Saviour Jesus Christ; and through Him to obtain an access unto the Father. But I have through experience learnt, that we are not apt to take at once the shortest way to this; but often endeavour, by various exercises, and under divers forms, to get into this way of life. This the precious words

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of the deareſt Saviour plainly evince; when he ſays, "Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate, for many, I "ſay unto you, ſhall ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not "be able." Luke xiii. 24. And again, "Strait "is the gate, and narrow the way, which leadeth "unto life, and *few* there be that find it." Matt. vii. 14.

Which words it very highly concerns us to lay to heart, and diligently to enquire, what may be the proper reaſon, "why ſo *few* find this narrow way;" and what that implies, "many ſhall ſeek to enter "in, and ſhall not be able." Notwithſtanding that it is ſo clearly pointed out in the holy ſcriptures, and is in plain words as well as by parobolical expreſſions, teſtified of and ſet forth. Now, if we duly ponder Chriſt's words, and conſider the difference there is between *ſtriving* and *ſeeking* (to the former of which an entry into life is granted, and of the latter a total incapacity of attaining it is affirmed) then let us employ our utmoſt diligence, not only to inveſtigate the real meaning of this truth, but alſo to reduce it to practice.

I muſt ingenuouſly own to my dear ſiſters, that this meaning of Chriſt, by his declaration here, remained a ſecret to me for a long time; and that as often as it recurred to memory, it was with great anguiſh of ſpirit; conſidering that *many* ſhall ſeek to enter in at the ſtrait gate, which leadeth to life, and ſhall not be *able:* Yea, that there are but *few* who find the narrow way to this gate. So that I have had many a conflict, and employed myſelf in much ſeeking and ſtriving to find out this narrow way; till at length the goodneſs of

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the moſt High preventing me, did open my underſtanding to diſcern, wherein the proper difference between the *ſeeking* and *ſtriving* ſtate lies. And I was hereby made acquainted, that all the exerciſes of godlineſs engaged in without putting off the old man, and putting on the new, are to no purpoſe: For inſtance, the going to public worſhip, praying, reading, and taking the ſacrament, the giving of alms; the drawing up articles of faith according to the words of ſcripture; and the appropriating to ourſelves all the benefits of Chriſt's propitiatory ſacrifice; or, as the ſcripture in brief expreſſeth it, "The having a form of knowledge, "and of the truth in the law," or in our bible. Rom. ii. 20. All this, my dear ſiſters, have I found in the ſeeking ſtate; yea, more ſtill, even divine contemplations, and a knowledge of the truth; all which Chriſt reckons as a part of ſeeking: The ſame which Paul alſo, through the Spirit of Chriſt, aſſerts, "If I had all knowledge, and underſtood "all myſteries, it might yet profit me nothing." 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 3. For in the midſt of all theſe things, in themſelves good, one may ſtill abide in his old nature, and ſubmit to the aſcendency of its luſts, as every day's experience ſufficiently evinces *. Whereas, "If any man be in Chriſt, "he "is a new creature." 2 Cor. v. 17. Nor is any other thing, but ſuch a new creature of avail in Chriſt.

* Were the Holy Ghoſt to ſhew the extent of the fleſh's confidence, expreſſed by St. Paul. Phil. iii. 1. ſeq. many a ſuppoſed chriſtian ſociety, and many a profeſſor of chriſtianity of the firſt rate, would have occaſion to tremble. God grant then, that we may neither deceive our own ſelves. 1 Cor. iii. 18. vi. 9. nor be deceived by others. Matt. xxiv. 4. Rev. xii. 9. "Let us come to the light, that our deeds may be made manifeſt, that they are wrought in God." John iii. 20, 21.

Chriſt. Whereby I have been taught by the Holy Ghoſt, that by the *ſtriving* to enter in at the ſtrait gate (of which ſtrivers alone our Saviour aſſerts, that they enter into life) we are to underſtand preciſely the mortification of the old man by the power of the death of Chriſt, in order to the reſurrection of the new man, by the power of his reſurrection.

And although this truth ſtands in the catechiſm, we are taught as children, and we learn the words thereof from our infancy, viz. 'That our old 'man muſt be drowned by daily remorſe and re-'pentance; and the new Man come forth, which 'after God is created in true righteouſneſs and holineſs.' Yet what Chriſt tells us remains nevertheleſs true, when he affirms, that *few* there be that find it, that is, the narrow way to life. It alſo verifies the teſtimony of the Holy Ghoſt by Paul; who in his epiſtles, ſpeaking of the laſt times, declares, "that they ſhall retain the form of godlineſs, "or truth; but deny the power of it." 2 Tim. iii. 5. Foraſmuch as in the practice and courſe of our day, nothing leſs than this truth is found, viz. the man in Chriſt, or, the new creature; whereby, "with open face, beholding as in a "glaſs the glory of the Lord, we are changed "into the ſame image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Cor. iii. 18. Inſomuch, that a man lives no more, but "Jeſus "Chriſt lives in him." Gal. ii. 20. as having died for him, and riſen again to this very end. Rom. xiv. 9. Nay, in our day the way of life comes under an evil ſuſpicion; ſo that every one, who only makes the firſt eſſay towards a godly life

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of this ſort is immediately expoſed to perſecution. And although he injures no man in any reſpect, nay rather is diſpoſed to do good to all men, to the utmoſt of his power; yet is he nevertheleſs more maligned and perſecuted, than any the vileſt miſcreant (whom they notwithſtanding indulge with civil liberties; yea, admit to baptiſm and the ſupper of the Lord; which yet they debar † him from, who is in good earneſt about his ſalvation; rejecting him as a fanatic and enthuſiaſt, who wants to introduce a new religion ‖. All which is an infallible proof, that the old man is not put off, nor the new Man, which is able to judge and diſcern all things, put on. And yet from this old man it is, that all ignorance in ſpirituals ariſes; becauſe "the natural man receiveth "not the things of the Spirit of God; for they "are fooliſhneſs unto him, neither can he know "them." 1 Cor. ii. 14. For were the *one* put off, and the *other* put on, another ſort of chriſtianity would ariſe, no longer divided and ſubdivided into ſo many ſects, as is now the caſe; but like the primitive chriſtians, as one heart and one ſoul, it would again make its appearance in the world.

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† The clergy abroad ſeem in this reſpect to have more authority than ours in England.

‖ I heartily wiſh, that thoſe perſons, who are ſo glib at dubbing other people Enthuſiaſts, &c. might well conſider what ground it ſprings from. There is undoubtedly ſuch a thing as Enthuſiaſm, or a falſe pretence to inſpiration. But muſt the abuſe of any thing, deſtroy the reality of it? If ſo, farewel every thing that is ſacred. I am bold to aſſert, that notwithſtanding all abuſes, if we are not found amongſt ſome of the miſcalled Enthuſiaſts of our day, we ſhall run a great hazard of not being owned by Chriſt, when he comes in his own glory and his Father's. Human reaſon is now ſtrongly at war againſt ſuperſtition. May I be found at all events in the ſuppoſed enthuſiaſtical mean between both theſe extremes!

Is it not true, dear ſiſters! that this has given riſe to the preſent divided ſtate of Chriſtendom? People have endeavoured to ſecure their own ſalvation by *Articles* and *Forms*, drawn out of the ſcripture; when one party has framed the ſcripture-words into this, and the other into another ſenſe and form; wrangling and damning one another without entering any of them into a cloſe examination of themſelves, how far they all live in the new creature. Had this been the main point of enquiry, in proceſs of time there would have been no want of real and uſeful knowledge: For whereſoever Chriſt dwelleth, and in whomſoever he liveth, no unfruitfulneſs in all knowledge and purity will remain; becauſe, that "in Him are hid "all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge." Col. ii. 3. and he diſcloſeth them to ſuch as are his friends, and do as he hath commanded them; which is to put into practice the genuine ſelf-denial; which alſo conſiſteth in this very thing, viz. the putting off the old man with his deeds, and following the Saviour; a thing quite impracticable without putting on the new Man. But now notwithſtanding all this, they will needs extort from merely natural men, that they ſhall comprehend articles of faith; nay even compile and inſtruct others in them; although the Holy Ghoſt has clearly told us, that it is a thing impracticable: For the natural man cannot ſo much as perceive the things of the Spirit of God, being fooliſhneſs unto him, nor can he comprehend them. Conſequently a new ſpiritual man is to this end indiſpenſably requiſite; one who can preach the doctrines of faith in *power*; who, as a man of God, and a perſon regenerated, muſt endeavour firſt of all,

all, by the power of God, to make of natural, ſpiritual men. In a word, he muſt go through Chriſt the door into the ſheepfold; that the Holy Ghoſt, the porter, may open to himſelf, before he can find an open door into the hearts of other men; and before he can challenge from them a right faith concerning Chriſt. Foraſmuch as the acquiring knowledge and certain phraſeologies, and the appropriating to ourſelves the things, which are written concerning Chriſt, is not faith; but to poſſeſs ſubſtantially what the holy ſcripture teſtifies concerning Chriſt, is faith. Do I now find it teſtifying, that Chriſt is the Propitiation for our ſins, and that he hath redeemed us from them? I muſt then in my own heart poſſeſs ſuch a propitiation, and the efficacy of this redemption to ſuch a degree, that what I am redeemed from muſt no longer be able to domineer over me; but I to rule and reign over it. Doth the ſcripture teſtify, that Chriſt hath died unto ſin once? Then muſt I alſo be dead with him unto it; not in the imagination, but in reality. Is he riſen again? Then muſt I be alſo riſen with him, and ſeek thoſe things only, which are above. Is he aſcended up into heaven? I muſt alſo aſcend with him, and have my converſation, or citizenſhip, in heaven. Is he, the Lord Chriſt, righteous? Then muſt I, by virtue of his righteouſneſs wrought out in his own perſon, alſo work righteouſneſs. And more eſpecially do I yield myſelf up to an egregious deluſion, ſhould I preſume, that becauſe he is righteous, I may ſet it down to my own account, that I am righteous too ‡. No, no; through him,

‡ This point has long been a bone of contention between chriſtians. But may we not ſay, that God's imputation is always a

him, who hath been made unto me righteouſneſs, I muſt alſo become righteous, and lay aſide all unrighteouſneſs, the offspring not of the new but of the old man. And where this hath not yet taken place, the man is not yet a partaker of, has no intereſt in Chriſt. In this caſe, he is Chriſt *for us* and exterior to us; but not yet Chriſt *in us*; whereas, without mincing the matter, *in him* we muſt be found. And although he did die for all the world ("for he is the propitiation not for our ſins only, "but alſo for the ſins of the whole world." 1 John ii. 2.) yet we believe nevertheleſs, according to the ſcriptures, that all men are not now *actually* ſaved; which would be a conſequence inevitable, were it ſufficient to have Chriſt only *for us*.

The having here a ſtrong ſenſation, impreſſion, or imagination, will in truth be of no avail to us; for it muſt be real: Otherwiſe ſuch a ſenſation, impreſſion, or imagination, will prove too ineffectual to overcome the world; according to the character given of faith in the ſcripture, "that it is "our victory, that it overcometh the world." 1 John v. 4, 5. And can any faith ſubſiſt but in the new creature? Becauſe in "Chriſt nothing "availeth, but a new creature." Gal. vi. 15. which is, with Paul, of the ſame import with "the faith "that worketh by love." Gal. v. 6.

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real and immediate communication of righteouſneſs? As ſurely, and in the ſame heart wherein one man's diſobedience has made us ſinners, does the obedience of one make us righteous. Rom. v. 19. It certainly is ſo; and then what our author alledges is only levelled at one of the moſt ſubtil and abominable abuſes of God's grace, that ſatan ever inſtigated human nature to.

Wherefore when the holy ſcripture treats of faith, it means *the* faith, which is poſſeſſed by the new creature; it being impoſſible for the old man to believe, as unbelief is his eſſential characteriſtic. *This* the ſacraments alſo refer to and ſuppoſe, viz. baptiſm and the ſupper of the Lord; for are we not baptized into the death of Chriſt, in order that the old man may abide in death, and a new Man come forth? That, "like as CHRIST was raiſed "from the dead, ſo WE alſo ſhould walk in new-"neſs of life." Rom. vi. 4. Now, if baptiſm be the laver of regeneration, ought it not to be our grand purſuit to attain the end of it? That we put on the new creature whereunto we are baptized; and lay aſide the old man, whom through baptiſm we have delivered up unto death? Without this effect, it will be ſaid of our baptiſm what Paul ſays, Rom. ii. 25, 26. of circumciſion, "That "to ſuch as do not attain the end and deſign of "that ordinance, their circumciſion is made uncir-"cumciſion:" So will our baptiſm, if we do not attain the end and deſign of baptiſm, by putting off the old man and putting on the new, whereunto we are baptized; be alſo not eſteemed as chriſtianity, but mere heatheniſm. The very ſame is the caſe with the Lord's ſupper too; which has been inſtituted and given us for a memorial, that we may "ſhew forth the death of Chriſt," not only with *words*, but alſo in *reality* and *power*. Now, this ordinance being inſtituted for the growth of the inward man, that "Chriſt may dwell in us "and we in him;" and being an immediate conſequent upon baptiſm, wherein we are to put on the new Man; ſhould we uſe it in the old man, in which we are alive and do his deeds; we then

" eat and drink damnation, or a judgment to our-
" ſelves." 1 Cor. xi. 29. For Chriſt came into the world for judgment to the old man; that, as the ſeat of the devil's works, it might be deſtroyed. 1 John iii. 8. For as Chriſt operateth in the new creature to produce the fruits of righteouſneſs to the glory of God; ſo on the other hand doth the devil actuate the old man to produce his works therein. And the works of the fleſh are manifeſt; for as the tree is known by its fruit, ſo are the old and the new man diſtinguiſhable by their ſeveral deeds. See, my beloved ſiſters! I have here, according to the meaſure of grace in utterance, given unto me, wiſhed to ſhew you the difference between the *ſeeking* and the *ſtriving* for an entrance into life; and have evinced the truth of Chriſt's words, that ſuch as *ſeek* after it only in *this way*, will not be *able* to compaſs it. Becauſe all outward exerciſes, ſuch as the attending on public worſhip, taking the ſacrament, faſting, praying, &c. are things which may be done without putting off the old man; which ought however to be performed and effected by *ſtriving* alone; through which, by the death of the old man, we preſs through all obſtacles into the life of the New. For *then* all ſuch exerciſes as reading, praying, giving alms, &c. and all other good works, are profitable and acceptable to Almighty God.

Herein has alſo the parable of the wiſe and fooliſh virgins its ground and reality. Matt. xxv. For whereas it is ſaid, that the fooliſh virgins took pains to go out to meet the Bridegroom, and to trim their lamps; this implies in the firſt point of compariſon and reſemblance, the very ſame as *ſeeking*.

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We may take the lamps for the external worſhip of God; but the veſſels filled with oil, which the wiſe take with them, intimates the *ſtriving* of the new Creature, which has no lack at all: And although a drowſineſs may ſteal upon the truly godly, yet are they poſſeſſed of a conſtant and habitual readineſs; ſo as immediately on the Bridegroom's voice to be in a capacity of obtaining an admiſſion. Whereas the reſt, who had always carelesly an entire dependence on others, without the ſubſtance of the holy unction in themſelves, come too late for admiſſion, and cannot procure it; being repulſed, as thoſe that had neglected to become new creatures; without which in Chriſt nothing is of any avail. They hoped indeed to have gained admiſſion, becauſe they knocked and ſaid, "Lord, "Lord, open unto us;" but they obtained it not. The ſame is intended by the ſimilitude propoſed, Matt. vii. 24. ſeq. Concerning the fooliſh man, who built his houſe upon the ſand; and the wiſe man who built his on a rock. For the Fabric on the ſand exhibits juſt the thing in the firſt point of reſemblance, ſpoken concerning the *ſeeking* ſtate, viz. that by all the exerciſes above mentioned, we get the credit and appearance of godlineſs, in the ſame manner as the houſe built on the ſand has the form of a proper houſe, being for all that a groundleſs fabric, an houſe without a foundation; which by deſcending rains, riſing floods and boiſterous winds, may be thrown down and demoliſhed. For inſtance, ſuppoſe we have acquired an habit of meekneſs and affabilty, and yet are not dead to the old man; let but a ſmall blaſt of human words of an irritating nature come ſuddenly upon us, and it is capable of demoliſhing this whole fabric and

bringing us into ſuch a chaſe and perturbation, as if we had neither heard of, nor acquired any meekneſs and affability. But this is not the caſe with the fabric built on the rock, which has a ſtable foundation and bears an analogy to *ſtriving*: where the ſandy bottom of the old nature, being dug and cleared away, the building reſts upon Chriſt the Rock of life, through whom we are become new creatures; ſo that HE is our inward life, and WE in him are transformed into his own Image, as in the ſecond Adam. Now the fabric, ſupported by this foundation, is impregnable and immoveable; and the virtues built on ſuch a bottom are divine virtues, which we are to ſhew forth, being merely the inſtruments of what the Spirit worketh in us; which is the very nature of a fabric, that neither fire conſumes, nor winds and inundations ſap and throw down; nay, it is rendered more firm and ſtable. For ſhould any incident ſurprize a perſon who is a new creature in Chriſt, he maintains his ground and manifeſts his meekneſs in power: And the more the aſſaults of the enemy, repreſented by floods and winds, advance againſt him; ſo much the ſtronger he becomes through the conflict in ſuppreſſing the old man, riſing like a whirlwind; who will not fail to exert his utmoſt power on thoſe eſcaped from him into Chriſt; though all to no purpoſe, becauſe not knowledge only, but deed alſo is ready to receive him. And therefore all virtues are ſtable in him, which in others not truly found in Chriſt, having all their ground in notional faith, are ſo far from being ready at any exigency of action and trial, that then we live and act diametrically oppoſite to the very things we however profeſs in words. And were

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we to expoſtulate with ſuch as thus think one way and live another, they would immediately rejoin and tell you, 'O we are weak human creatures! 'we are incapable of doing it. And ſuch as con- 'ceit themſelves to do it, are only inflated ſaints, '&c.' Nay, they go ſo far as to bleſs them- ſelves, becauſe they aſcribe honour to Chriſt, and confeſs themſelves in fact to be ſo very weak: And they cenſure others who labour after a good con- verſation in truth, as proud Phariſees, going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, and wanting to be ſaved by their own works.

To ſuch a pitch, deareſt ſiſters! has the devil brought matters, that God's truth is miſunder- ſtood and very groſly miſapplied. For, whereas man, under the knowledge of his being a weak and worthleſs creature, without the ability ſo much as to think a good thought, much leſs to ſpeak, and leaſt of all to do a good act; is forced to reſign all claim to the promiſed ſalvation (foraſmuch as with- out doing the will of God none can be ſaved. Matt. vii. 21.) And whereas man for this very reaſon, becauſe he is by nature in a plight ſo wretched, ought to fly to Jeſus Chriſt, that in HIM he might become a new creature (whereby he might after- wards be a match for every thing, and be releaſed by Jeſus Chriſt from the old nature, which in divine matters is ſo incompetent) yet man for all this re- mains out of Chriſt, retaining and hugging his ſin- ful weakneſs, and never attaining to a victory in and through Chriſt. Think only, how deteſtable a thing it is, that the old man would fain do honour to Chriſt, by retaining as it were his old ſlough, and continuing in ſins with the praiſes of the atonement

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in his mouth! Whereas the Lord Jesus Christ is hereby dishonoured to the highest degree, because his precious atonement is invalidated and rendered so ineffectual as not ACTUALLY to redeem us from sin, but only to bear the *name* of doing it. But a man, renewed in Jesus Christ, knows and feels that he is ACTUALLY redeemed; and yet does not glory in himself, but his glory is in the Lord Christ. And when he proves by his own example that there is a *reality* in such redemption, he does not do his good works by way of ostentation, like those who still live in the old man; but doth such works as Jesus worketh in him to the glory of the heavenly Father. Wherefore neither doth he attribute them to himself, as seeking honour from men; but he seeks it from God only, merely wishing that the name of God may through him be glorified. And should he remonstrate against his neighbour's perversion of divine things, his aim thereby is not to exalt and make himself respectable; but being cordially affected towards the other's salvation, would fain have him also come to the real knowledge of the truth. But *this* the natural man comprehendeth not, all the saving doctrines of Christ being folly to him. He cannot comprehend them, because they are diametrically opposite to his depraved reason, and appear to him in a light so nonsensical, that he even makes them matter of his banter and ridicule. And yet at same time he adopts the words thereof, as articles of his faith; and with his mouth professes them to be the words of God, whilst he is vilifying them in fact: A procedure this that would be incredible, had not the Holy Ghost forewarned us, that the things of the Spirit of God would in their practice and substance be mere non-

sense

ſenſe and folly to the natural man; the words of which natural men pronounce and confeſs, but deny their meaning and power.

Our conviction of this ought to ſtimulate *us* to *ſtrive*, that we may obtain. And therefore, *according* to my ſmall ability, I will ſuggeſt to you what has been of uſe to me in this reſpect. Not, my dear ſiſters! "as though I count I had already attained, either were already perfect:" But all I ſay is, that with Paul, "I forget thoſe things that "are behind, and reach forth unto thoſe things "that are before, that I may apprehend that for "which alſo I am apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus." Phil. iii. 12, 13. I have in fact and by experience found, that I muſt devote my entire will to God. For, whereas through the fall of man I departed with my will from God; ſo muſt I return again by the converſion of my entire will to God. For ſo long as we keep any view whatſoever in reſerve to ourſelves, it is impoſſible fully to arrive at this. Every one that makes the experiment will find, that no quality of birth, nor any ſituation in life can obſtruct our becoming true diſciples and followers of Chriſt, and conſequently new creatures in Chriſt; provided we do but abandon every view to men, and the reflection upon other creatures. But ſo long as we retain and foſter any ſuch view, we ſhall not become pure and entire; but, like a blind man groping in the dark, ſhall abide under perpetual ſcruples, and arrive at no divine aſſurance and ſatisfaction; "we "ſhall be ever learning, and never coming to the "knowledge of the truth." 2 Tim. iii. 7. Like a man trying to climb an high hill of ſand, having almoſt gained the ſummit with extreme difficulty; the

the ground ſinks under him, and he ſlides down again from top to bottom. For though ſomething may with extreme difficulty be ſurmounted; yet, if our own views be not dead, we may by one or another occaſion be drawn away and hurried back again; inſomuch that all the pains we have put ourſelves to, without a true purity of intention, may prove abortive. This has been my own ſad experience. Before I was got above human views and conſiderations, how many tears have I ſhed; ſometimes imagining the fault lay on my being born of quality, which would not admit of my becoming a ſimple and thorough follower of Chriſt; and at other times it ſeemed to me as though it were owing to the place I had lived in. However the Lord commiſerating my unhappy condition, opened my underſtanding, ſo that I could diſcern and acknowledge, that nothing but *human views* were my hinderance, and that I was loth to bear the reproach of Chriſt. John v. 44. vii. 6, 7, 48. But no ſooner, under this ſight and with God's grace, did I fix the reſolution of walking in all ſimplicity, according to the word and pattern of my Lord Jeſus Chriſt; but it happily ended in my ſalvation: So that now "I know in whom I believe;" and can ſay, according to my meaſure with Paul, "I believe, and "therefore ſpeak." 2 Cor. iv. 13. And although ſince the time of my having formed ſuch a reſolution in the Lord, and put it, by his power, into practice; I have been obliged to undergo many a trial, and have by manifold "experience got my ſenſes exer-"ciſed to diſcern both good and evil." Heb. v. 14. Yet I can affirm, that from that very hour the Lord has been with me, ſhewing the utmoſt patience towards me; bearing with my ignorance and untowardneſs

towardneſs in divine things; enlightening me more and more with the light of life; working in me genujne heart's humility, through his holy forgiveneſs; and afterwards opening to me, from time to time, many myſteries and promiſes concerning events to come: thereby ſtrengthening me for my ſpiritual warfare, and inſtigating me unto *true* godlineſs. Amidſt all which I never forgot, that "whoſoever would have ſuch an hope in him, ought "to purify himſelf, even as he is pure." 1 John iii. 3. And becauſe I met with frequent occaſion of being made ſenſible of my own impotency by his forgiveneſs, and in the experience, that "without him I could abſolutely do nothing." John xv. 5. ſo he thereby preſerved me from being puffed up in reference to my neighbour, whom I pitied; owning that I had nothing of myſelf, but was ſolely "by the grace of God what I was." 1 Cor. xv. 10. and at length I came ſo far as to relinquiſh all ſelf-aſſuming in divine things; only wiſhing inceſſantly that I might be a ſerviceable inſtrument to my faithful Creator; an inſtrument, that takes as little to itſelf of what HE effects by it; as any earthen veſſel in the potter's hand, who forms it to his own ends, aſſumes any thing to itſelf. Under ſuch ſubjection hath my God exerciſed me a while, till at length I came into the poſſeſſion of his peace, and deſcried many depths in his incomprehenſible ways and unſearchable judgments; and thus "have known him that is from the beginning." 1 John ii. 14. Inſomuch that no *occaſion of ſtumbling* is any longer in my way; but every thing tends to forward me to his glory.

Yet

Yet muſt I notwithſtanding never be at a ſtand, but grow and advance in the inward man, and keep upon my guard, that the old man may never cajole and draw me into any defilement; conſequently "am to keep myſelf in the power of God, that "that wicked one may not touch me." 1 John v. 18. Which then, deareſt ſiſters! is another thing I would recommend to you. I mean, that having ſincerely devoted your whole wills to God, and got all bye-views under your feet; you then take Chriſt's exhortation to yourſelves, when he ſays, "Watch "and pray." One does not at firſt diſcern the importance of this: for it being directly perceptible that no outward watching can be hereby underſtood; and every man from his infancy growing up in inattention to, and an almoſt total ignorance of his heart, ſo as to pay no regard to its ſtirrings and movings, or operations; hence it comes to paſs, that a man is plunged into one or another vice, before he is aware. This we ſee in David, who aſcribes it to grace that he had found his heart. "Lord, "ſays he, thy ſervant has found his heart †." 2 Sam. vii. 27. For, till we have found our heart, no *watching* can properly take place; becauſe that, "which "defileth a man, cometh forth from the heart." Matt. xv. 18. But ſo long as a man is unacquainted with his own heart (which, on account of diſſipation and diſtraction, he hath not yet truly found) neither can he diſcern and diſtinguiſh its ſtirrings and movings. Wherefore we muſt by the grace of God take good heed to habituate ourſelves to abide at home within our own hearts, and take due cognizance

† This is Luther's verſion; in ours it runs thus, "found in his "heart." In the Hebrew it is "found with his heart, &c."

cognizance of what paſſeth there; which is preciſely what our Saviour means by *watching*. Now when we perceive by various incidental occaſions, that wrath, hatred, ſelf-complacence, ſelf-love, and the like, will be ſpringing up out of the heart (which indeed the enemy ſtirs up, but is permitted by God for our good; that we may be able to diſcern the old man, and learn to mortify him in his power) we muſt then be rouſed up to prayer in order to ſupplicate ſtrength from on high to get this old man out of the heart, and that Chriſt may be truly formed in us. For although we never, through the whole courſe of our lives, can ſit down in ſecurity, and therefore muſt never diſmiſs and remit our *watching* and *praying*; yet may we nevertheleſs by degrees, and through various exerciſes and experience, arrive through God's grace to ſuch a ſtate, that the old man is no longer able to domineer over us; rather that we enjoy the Preſence of Chriſt to ſuch a degree, that we have a great confidence in our heart towards God, and are filled with all kinds of divine knowledge, unto all the fulneſs of God; and can grow up "to the meaſure of the ſtature of the "fulneſs of Chriſt." Eph. iv. 13. We may become temples of God and Chriſt, wherein the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt reſideth, walketh, teacheth, teſtifieth, and diſcloſeth one depth after the other, according to the good pleaſure of his own will. Thus one goes on from glory to glory, and our *watch* on the whole grows eaſier and eaſier; becauſe we are ſtanding in the power of God, and have the ſtirrings and movings of the heart under controul and command, being habituated with Jacob to the ſtaying at home, to the being turned inward, and not roving abroad like Eſau, Gen. xxv. 27. And thus it muſt

alſo be amidſt a multiplicity of external employments, againſt the accumulation and oppreſſion of which we muſt however be on our guard, leſt they diſſipate, diſtract, and decoy us out of our fortreſs. 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. We have in the ſtate above deſcribed all proper liberty, becauſe we uſe every thing with a pure heart. But ſince all things are not expedient, and may even frequently prove a ſtumbling-block to the weak; therefore we diſclaim every privilege, which is not for edification. And here we begin to diſcern how great and extenſive our privileges are, and how true that ſcripture is, that "godlineſs has the promiſe of the life that "now is and of that which is to come." 1 Tim. iv. 8. For as ſoon as a perſon can in truth make uſe of all things, as if he uſed them not, not ſuffering his heart to cleave to any of them; then the heavenly Father loves to give him joy, and with pleaſure to ſatisfy him, even in temporals; ſo that he obtains theſe things into the bargain: And when others, incapable of ſtanding the teſt, often eat the bread of carefulneſs and ſorrow, theſe get theirs as it were in ſleep, and taſte a bleſſing in all things; which they however poſſeſs, as if they poſſeſſed them not. Becauſe they do not regard them as their own property; but only as a truſt repoſed in them, to be employed in the way the Giver of all good things ſhall beſt approve and point out. And even though they know that "all things are theirs, "whether things preſent or things to come." 1 Cor. iii. 21. ad fin. yet do "they not abuſe them." vii. 31. "by loving the world or the things in the world." 1 John ii. 15. but loving the creature in God, as God's creation and handy-work, praiſing and adoring him for it. Then in the place of former repinings,

repinings, nothing but thankſgivings ſucceed: In the place of diſquietude, quietneſs, and aſſurance; and inſtead of the horrible apprehenſions of things that are to come, which might well make mens hearts to fail in them for fear and dread, comfort and confidence in God, becauſe their redemption draweth nigh. We are ſatisfied, that the Lord will then ſhelter and protect his own; nay, that "he will ſpare them, as a man ſpareth his own "ſon that ſerveth him." Malach. iii. 17. And "before the earth be deſtroyed, and the hour of "temptation comes upon the face of the whole "earth." 2 Pet. iii. 10, 11. Rev. iii. 10. "They "ſhall be ſealed with the ſeal of the living God." Rev. vii. They ſhall eat when others hunger; drink, when others thirſt; "ſing for joy of heart, "when others cry and howl for ſorrow of heart; "and ſhall alſo in the days of famine be ſatisfied:" And after been perfected in this tabernacle of the body, ſhall either by martyrdom (for which God has imparted ſufficient ſtrength unto them) or in ſome other way, bid adieu to this world, and receive a "glorious kingdom and a diadem of beauty from "the hand of the Lord;" and ſhall commence a never-ending felicity, "the ſecond death having "no power over them; being partakers of the "firſt reſurrection, and as prieſts of God and "Chriſt, ſitting on the throne, and reigning with "Chriſt a thouſand years." Rev. xx. yea, from eternity to eternity. This is in very deed "the "promiſe of the life which now is, and of that "which is to come." And although it be not immediately beſtowed, do not on that account deſpond; ſeeing victory muſt precede the enjoyment of the promiſes. "The ſtriving againſt ſin," Heb. xii. 4.

and " the good fight of faith." 2 Tim. iv. 7. are firſt in order ; for as we are to ſtrive againſt ſin to ſubjugate or bring under the old man ; ſo muſt we alſo " contend earneſtly for the faith which " was once given to the ſaints," Jude 3. that in this faith we may go on " conquering and to conquer." But firſt of all it muſt ſuffice us to do good, becauſe it is the will of God, and we afterwards diſcern how good that will is ; yea, that all God's commandments are lovely, and not grievous : Inſomuch that the performing God's commandments is a real ſelf-gratification, being thereby exempted from every thing that can annoy and hurt us. Conſequently by being DOERS we learn by the cleareſt and moſt natural evidence of our own experience, that the love of God has iſſued out no other commandments than ſuch as conſtitute the happineſs of mankind ; nor any other prohibitions than from ſuch things as are detrimental and afflictive both to their ſouls and bodies. Thus in ſuch a " deed we are bleſſed." James i. 25. and can have a right knowledge by our own experience, that the God, who ſeeks our ſalvation and well-being in every thing to ſuch a degree, muſt needs be *love* itſelf. 1 John iv. 8, 16. But where *deed* is wanting, and we are unconcerned to advance any further than to notional knowledge ; buoying ourſelves up with a falſe imagination, and taking it for granted we are chriſtians, and ſo ought to appropriate Chriſt and his righteouſneſs (as we commonly ſpeak) to ourſelves ; we ſhall for all that diſcover, that we were nothing more than heathens. For what though we did not worſhip ſtocks and ſtones ; yet we loved and were more addicted to ſenſual pleaſures than to God ; and

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were in various ways wholly attached and devoted to the things of the world. And at the laſt day, if we continue in the old nature, we ſhall have far more to anſwer for (as having profeſſed ourſelves chriſtians, and been really heathens; as having confeſſed the ſcriptures, and yet lived counter to them) than they who were outwardly heathens, and had no means of knowing the will of God, as we had. Neither will it be of the leaſt avail here to any perſon, that he was received into this or the other church; which preſumed they had the genuine faith, becauſe their doctrines of faith were taken in the pureſt and moſt ſincere manner from the ſcripture: No, no; this will be the queſtion, How ſuch a one converted it into life? whether ſuch boaſted purity of doctrine led him to purity of life, and made him a new creature in Chriſt Jeſus? ſo that he can ſay with Paul, "I live not, but Chriſt liveth in me." Gal. ii. 20. Such a one does indeed not come into judgment, neither does he die; but paſſeth out of this mortality into life; and upon the demolition of this earthly tabernacle obtains a building from heaven, a glorified body according to the likeneſs of Chriſt's glorious body. Lo! ſuch is our hope towards him; and moreover, as long as we are here on our pilgrimage to the Lord, "are perſuaded that "neither things preſent, nor things to come ſhall "ever ſeparate us from the love of God." Rom. viii. 38, 39. Hallelujah!

THIS, my deareſt ſiſters! is what I had in my heart to propoſe to you, when I parted and took leave of you as to bodily preſence. But may the God of all fidelity, who is able to preſerve you

from this wicked world, and to impart all the riches of his divine knowledge unto you; ſo as to outſtrip me far, and get an image of Chriſt formed in your own hearts far more complete than any repreſentation, I (according to my meaſure) may be able to make of it: May this faithful God be gracious unto you; and lift up the light of his countenance upon you; that in theſe laſt days, when both the hour of temptation and the ſealing of his faithful ones is approaching, ‖ you may ſtand your ground, and obtain his divine ſeal. For this I bow my knees in his preſence, promiſing myſelf a favourable anſwer; and that in his own good time we may meet and embrace each other before the throne of God and the Lamb: Not only as having been begotten by one and the ſame earthly father, and born of one and the ſame earthly mother; but alſo as having been begotten and born of God and of the heavenly Jeruſalem. So run then, deareſt ſiſters! that ye may obtain. And be you hereby, from the very bottom of my heart, commended to the Love Eternal,

By your faithful ſiſter,

Joanna Eleonora de Merlau.

‖ What we love we wiſh for, and are but too apt to be unduly precipitant in our expectations of. This has been truly the caſe with reſpect to our dear LORD's *coming*, from the apoſtles down to the preſent day. The uncertainty of the time has infinite wiſdom in it, to keep us *always* on the watch. See the following paſſages, 1 Cor. i. 7. Phil. iii. 20. iv. 5. 1 Theſſ. i. 10. 2 Theſſ. ii. 1, 2. 2 Tim. iv. 8. James v. 7, 8, 9. 1 John ii. 28. Rev. xxii. 20. But the Lord will ſurely come in the fulneſs of time. Luke xviii. 7, 8. Acts i. 11.

P. S.

P. S. I heartily ſalute my dear brother, begotten of the ſame bodily father, but not born of the ſame mother with myſelf. I wiſh him the birth from above, and that therein we may become near to each other, and be found under one heart. May the Lord teach him to know, that not *many* noble are called; to the end he may be found amongſt the *few*, which are; and who have devoted themſelves to God in Chriſt Jeſus, and kept themſelves unſpotted from the world! Amen.

The Editor wiſhes to meet all ſincere ſouls of every denomination of Chriſtendom in the following, or ſome ſuch ſimilar petitions, at the throne of grace.

RIGHTEOUS and merciful Lord! be pleaſed to bring all kinds and degrees, both of SUPERSTITION and INFIDELITY, to a ſpeedy end! May every one of thy dear children (now more or leſs enthralled under their Babylonian captivity, and in their diſperſion amongſt the various denominations of Chriſtendom) unanimouſly turn their faces Zion-ward, united one with another in a ſpirit of mourning and ſupplication for deliverance, until thou, our only Lord and Saviour, canſt bring us back again to our own city, and reunite us com-

completely, according to thy own plan (expreſſed in thy laſt farewell-prayer with thy diſciples) in one heart and one ſoul, as Thou and the Father are One: Yea, Lord! ſo may we all become one in Thee, as Thou and the Father are One, and be perfect in One. Pardon us all our crying ſins and iniquities; wherewith, under our ſeveral profeſſions, we have hitherto more diſhonoured than we have glorified thy name, by reſiſting, quenching, and grieving thy Holy Spirit. Do not leave us nor forſake us, but rather ariſe more and more with healing in thy wings, and with marvellous light upon all our hearts and minds, that we may no longer grope about amidſt the miſts of Babel-darkneſs and ignorance, falling upon and aggrieving one another. Rather may all proud reaſonings and imaginations ceaſe, and be ſucceeded by an humble, meek, penitential, and infantile ſimplicity; ſo that *Ephraim* may no longer envy *Judah*, nor *Judah* vex *Ephraim*. Let each of us aſpire to be the greateſt in the way which Thou Thyſelf haſt preſcribed us, both by precept and example, namely, by becoming meek and lowly in heart, and the leaſt of all: Thus may we all find refreſhment and true reſt to our ſouls. May none of us henceforth put aſunder what God has ſo inſeparably joined together; but rather may our faith be ever attended with its love and works; and may love with its works be the ſole and evident iſſue of our faith. O that all empty, premature, unprofitable, yea, hurtful notions and opinions, might ceaſe to be eſteemed and contended for amongſt us as the faith once delivered to the ſaints; and a merely human dead righteouſneſs to uſurp the place of the living and divine, and the works wrought in God. Let

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all falſe inſpirations, the offspring of pride and ſelf-conceit, (like Dagon before the ark) fall down before the preſence of thy Holy Spirit of truth, the promiſed Comforter. May we never be carried away with any, *Lo, here is Chriſt, or Lo there!* being aſſured, that HE and his kingdom muſt be within us. Give us all needful light and diſcernment to try the ſpirits, whether they are of God; to prove all things by the true Touchſtone, and then to hold faſt that only which is good. May none of us ever in the leaſt degree be tempted to magnify our own rational powers beyond the bounds appointed for them, and leaſt of all to call the wiſdom and power of God in a Saviour crucified, enthuſiaſtic folly and nonſenſe. Rather may thy all-precious blood truly beſprinkle and waſh every poor ſinner's heart amongſt us. May thy death mortify all evil, and thy reſurrection vivify all good in us. Let the myſterious paſſion of thy croſs, in conjunction with the whole proceſs of thy life in this world, at once confound the pride and relieve the miſery we all feel ourſelves in here. Let us truly follow thee in the regeneration, let us ſuffer that we may reign with thee. Take away the veil from our hearts, and baniſh all the helliſh iſſue, all the ſmalleſt remains of the evil heart of unbelief from us all. Let the genuine and child-like faith, with all its heavenly fruits of the Spirit, the ſeal and earneſt of our everlaſting inheritance, ſucceed in their place. Fill, O fill the hearts of thy choſen, as heretofore, with faith, love, and the Holy Ghoſt! By him ſhed the unſpeakable love of God abroad in all our hearts, and impart unto us the peace which paſſeth all underſtanding; then ſhall thy joy be full in us, and our joy full in Thee.

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May we truly love thee and love one another, and ſo keep thy word, thy commandments, that we may be beloved of Thee and thy Father, and Ye may come into and make an uninterrupted abode in us; that we may become, in body, ſoul, and ſpirit, an holy temple, an habitation of God through the Spirit. May all our future contention be only how, in the beſt and eaſieſt manner, to attain to, and to aſſiſt each to attain, this ſupreme felicity of our holy calling. Let every thing, conducive thereunto (how obſolete and deſpicable ſoever amongſt men) be dear and acceptable; and every thing obſtructive to it (how current and agreeable ſoever to our depraved nature) be odious and abominable to us. Let nothing ſhort of thy whole mind and likeneſs, in the whole form of the croſs, ever content us. Let us renounce ourſelves, every thing near and dear to us, yea, even our own lives, that we may be thy genuine diſciples, and Thou mayeſt be All in All to us: That from Thee, made to us of God wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption; that from Thee, the treaſury of all wiſdom and knowledge, the very fulneſs of the Godhead bodily, we we may derive all needful knowledge, graces, and gifts, both for our own perſonal happineſs, and for the preaching of thy everlaſting goſpel to every creature; for the perfecting of the ſaints, for the work of the miniſtry, for the edifying the body of Chriſt, until we all come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt! Amen and Amen! Even ſo, Lord, come quickly!

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